



# DAVID IRONS

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**Contact us:**

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**Dear Community Members,**

Once again it is that time when we are all busy finishing end-of-the-year projects, preparing for the holidays and getting ready to greet a new year. Here at the Metropolitan King County Council, we've just completed our last big project of the year, the county budget.

It is a pleasure to report to you that King County is living within its means. In November, the Council adopted a \$3 billion budget for 2004, including a general operating budget of \$513 million. This budget includes no new taxes and stays within the 1-percent limit on property tax increases established by I-747.

In the face of dwindling income combined with rising health care costs, we have chosen to focus on finding budget efficiencies and on raising new funds with entrepreneurial programs instead of raising taxes. The Council wrestled with proposals based on recommendations from the Budget Advisory Task Force to overhaul operation of the Solid Waste Division and to provide incentives for cities to annex urban unincorporated areas.

Although we remain concerned about the direction this budget takes in gleaning operating fund revenue from solid waste fees, I am proud that the Council enacted protective conditions on the annexation proposal. Our suburban cities must not become a dumping ground for the county's financial problems, and we've put in place measures to ensure that annexations will be done in a thoughtful, deliberative manner.

My office also advocated successfully for restored funding of programs that benefit rural, unincorporated areas, such as inspections for private wells and on-site septic systems, as well as full funding for code enforcement officers who respond to environmental degradation complaints. The budget also includes nearly \$15.5 million in capital appropriations to benefit projects in District 12. (See CIP list inside.)

In addition, wastewater funds reserved for education are allocated to the Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (\$20,000) and the Friends of the Trail (\$50,000). This represents another step toward maintaining and improving our incomparable quality of life.

The coming year promises significant changes such as updates of the transportation concurrency model, Comprehensive Plan, building code, and critical areas restrictions. We hope you will stay engaged and provide comments as the Council deliberates on these issues. Until then, we wish you the warmest regards for the holiday season and the new year.

**Sincerely,**

**King County Councilmember . District 12**



**King County Council  
Committee Work**

Growth Management &  
Unincorporated Areas

Natural Resources, Parks and  
Open Spaces (vice chair)

Regional Transit Committee

Regional Water Quality  
Committee

Transportation Committee

**Regional Committee  
Memberships**

Board of Health

Cedar River Council, co-chair

Central Puget Sound Economic  
Development District

Eastside Transportation  
Partnership

Growth Management Planning  
Council

Puget Sound Regional Council's  
Growth Management Policy Board

Regional Transportation  
Investment District, Executive  
Board alternate

# Transportation

## RTID Update

King County and the Puget Sound region now stand on the threshold of a brighter transportation future. The work of the Regional Transportation Investment District is bringing us closer to unlocking the stalled traffic on our freeways and highways. Voters will have the ultimate authority to decide what transportation improvements should be made, and how they should be funded, with a vote anticipated on the November 2004 ballot. We encourage you to get involved in this process.

The authority to create RTID was granted by the Washington State Legislature in 2002 to provide the Puget Sound region with a mechanism for funding projects to help solve the Puget Sound's enormous transportation crisis. RTID allows the Pierce, King and Snohomish county councils to put a funding request for a list of projects on the ballot for a vote of the people. The recommendations concerning taxes and project lists are made by all three County Councils, and the money raised ultimately will be controlled by the same body.



As King County prepares to finalize a list of recommended projects, we are proud to report that Eastside communities stand to benefit greatly from this badly needed investment in our infrastructure. Capacity upgrades on I-405, I-90 and Highway 520 will go a long way to improving mobility for commuters and for business. To pay for the estimated \$14 billion cost of these improvements in three counties, RTID will ask voters to approve a funding package made up of several revenue sources. The package is designed to raise sufficient

revenue to make a real difference in our traffic congestion. As an alternate on the RTID Executive Board, I have been working closely with the process to put together a regional transportation package, and I look forward to discussing these options with you in the coming year.

## Sunset Interchange and SPAR

We are proud to announce a major step forward in traffic congestion relief for the Issaquah area. On Friday, Aug. 29, we assisted federal, state, county and city officials with the unveiling of the new Sunset Interchange on I-90 and the new Highland Drive.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the opening of new access to the Sammamish Plateau from I-90. For the first time, east-bound traffic from I-90 can exit to Issaquah via Sunset Way, or exit to Issaquah Highlands on the Plateau. The interchange connects with the new Sammamish Plateau Access Road (SPAR), now known as Highland Drive, which serves the Issaquah Highlands urban village and links to Plateau communities and the City of Sammamish. The new roadway is projected to handle between 50,000 and 60,000 vehicles per day, relieving congestion in the I-90-East Lake Sammamish Parkway corridor.

## Issaquah Highlands park-and-ride

On Sept. 29, I also helped open the Issaquah Highlands Interim Park-and-Ride lot, and it now is served by Sound Transit Regional Express bus service. Residents of Sammamish and the Issaquah Highlands now can board a bus without having to leave the Plateau. This is another big step toward relieving traffic congestion.

The interim Park-and-Ride is located across the street from the site where King County Metro will build a permanent 1,000-stall parking garage. We were successful in securing \$9 million in the King County budget and in building a regional partnership with additional funding to increase the size of the facility from 500 to 1,000 stalls. A federal contribution secured by Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn and support from Sound Transit filled the remaining funding needs. This new Park-and-Ride, to be completed in 2005, will be at the center of a new Microsoft campus and a new urban village.

For more information about Regional Express Route 554 and for bus schedules please visit the Sound Transit website at [www.soundtransit.org](http://www.soundtransit.org).

# Transportation



## Highway 169 Corridor Coalition

For years, the Maple Valley Highway (State Route 169) has been neglected. While growth management laws have encouraged development and population growth in urban cities along the corridor, improvements

have not kept pace. Highway 169 is the main route for commuting from the rapidly growing communities of Enumclaw, Black Diamond and Maple Valley, and a corridor needs study is a vital step toward making much-needed improvements.

Progress on this road has been hindered because different jurisdictions – cities, county, state – have responsibility for the various sections and aspects of the roadway. As a result of the multi-jurisdictional nature of the problem, we are working with the City of Maple Valley to build a coalition dedicated to addressing the safety and traffic concerns of the Highway 169

corridor. Support for this effort comes from the cities of Renton, Maple Valley, Black Diamond, and Enumclaw; the Maple Valley/Black Diamond and Renton chambers of commerce, and local school districts.

For the past several years, the Washington State Department of Transportation requested money from the Legislature to perform a corridor study on Highway 169. This project was overshadowed by other transportation needs, however, and the money never was appropriated. Through this coalition, we will be able to speak to the Legislature with one voice and elevate understanding of the safety and mobility needs on Highway 169.

A corridor study would develop alternatives and allow the people along this corridor to have a say in their development. The building of this coalition has not focused on any predetermined solution to the traffic problem. Instead, it recognizes that action is needed and that the state must work with us in developing solutions. I encourage your participation in this important process.

# Governance

## Biennial Budgeting amendment

At the November 2003 election, voters approved an amendment to the King County Charter that gives the County the option to shift to a two-year budget cycle. Councilmember Larry Phillips and I co-sponsored this proposal as a method that could be used to improve long-range planning and more efficient use of county funds. This option to go to biennial budgeting for part or all of our budget gives us a chance to do more than just react to the budget challenges facing King County. Implementing a biennial budget process still will require a separate Council ordinance. That will wait for a report from the King County Commission on Governance, which currently is reviewing the biennial budgeting option and will make a recommendation next year.

## UACs

I would like to thank the many dedicated volunteers who serve on the two Unincorporated Area Councils in District 12. If you live in an unincorporated area and would like to get involved with providing advice and recommendations to the Metropolitan King County Council, please attend your local UAC meeting:

\* Four Creeks UAC meets at 7 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the East Renton Community Church. Contact Edie Jorgensen at [edie4creeks@yahoo.com](mailto:edie4creeks@yahoo.com).

\* Greater Maple Valley UAC, meets at 7 p.m. the first Monday of each month at King County Police Precinct #3 in Maple Valley. Contact Chair Dick Bonewits at [richb2@msn.com](mailto:richb2@msn.com).

## E-mail Updates

If you would like to receive regular e-mail updates about upcoming legislation and King County activities in District 12, please call me at (206) 296-1012, or e-mail me at [david.ironson@metrokc.gov](mailto:david.ironson@metrokc.gov).

# Van Donations

Senior citizens and students in the greater Issaquah and east Renton areas will find it easier to get around thanks to donations of two surplus vans from the King County Vanpool Program. On Oct. 31, I delivered surplus vans to the Issaquah Valley Senior Center and the Issaquah School District's Special Service Transition Program.

Issaquah Valley Seniors will use their van to provide transportation for many of the members who are disabled or unable to drive. The Senior Center will be able to transport local seniors to counseling services, to appointments with other agencies such as Social Security, and to recreational events, in addition to providing meals-on-wheels. The Senior Center is a vital resource to many of our retired residents who are on fixed incomes and unable to get around on their own. This is a small way of saying thank you to an agency that helps those who might fall through the cracks without the programs the center provides.

The Issaquah School District will use its van to provide transportation for moderately-to-severely disabled students ages 18 to 21 who have completed their high school programs and are transitioning into the community. The van will enable students to become as independent as possible as they move from a highly controlled school environment to jobs and activities in the community. The availability of the van also will decrease student dependence on King County's ACCESS bus service. This program is a perfect example of the population that our van donations were designed to serve. I am proud to assist these remarkable young people in succeeding with their life goals and becoming productive members of our community.



*Receiving a retired Metro vanpool van from Councilmember Irons in October are, from left, Issaquah School Board member Barb deMichele, school district transportation director Craig Christensen, Special Education Administrator Diana Waterstrat, Transition Program teacher Diana Gay and Secondary Special Services Director Susan Wolever.*



*The Issaquah Valley Senior Center also received a retired Metro van from Councilmember Irons, with thanks from Val Borman (left) and Senior Center Director Tommie Troutman.*

In 1995, the County Council began donating retired vans to non-profit groups for the transportation of low-income clients. That donation effort has grown to include both non-profits and local governments. The vans now meet the transportation needs of the low-income clients, the elderly and the disabled.



# Land Use

## Rural Jobs Initiative

In October, the County Council took a big step in supporting my Rural Jobs Initiative with the adoption of my proposal allowing small-scale wineries to operate in the rural areas to promote tourism, agriculture and create jobs. Previous winery regulations had required all such facilities to use only grapes produced in King County. That requirement made wineries infeasible here because of a cool, wet climate inhospitable to grape-growing.

Under the newly approved regulations, wineries can use grapes grown in other areas until research develops grapes suited to this area's climate. In areas zoned for agricultural crops, wineries can be up to 3,500 square feet, or, if located in an existing farm building, up to the size of the structure. In the rural area, wineries can be up to 8,000 square feet with an additional 8,000 square feet for underground storage, but on Vashon Island, the maximum size would be 6,000 square feet.

This is an invaluable opportunity for the success of small, rural businesses in King County. This preserves rural character while promoting economic development and meeting the challenges of protecting the environmental quality of the rural area.

## 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update

The County has begun working on a major update to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 2004. For more information on the 2004 Comprehensive Plan update, please visit the DDES website at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/compplan/2004/index.htm>. The Executive is due to submit the Comprehensive Plan update to the Council on March 1, 2004. During 2004, opportunities for public comment will be available during Council Committee meetings as well as at public hearings before the full Council. Please contact me with any questions you may have regarding this process.

## CAO and Stormwater Update

The second draft revision of the Critical Areas Ordinance and the Stormwater Ordinance was released this earlier this fall, and additional public comments have been collected. The Executive is expected to submit his proposal to the Council by the end of this year. Stay abreast of changes by viewing: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/cao/index.htm>

## 2004 Capital Improvement Projects in District 12

### Road improvement funds will go toward:

- \$37,000 for completion of the Preston Bridge replacement project
- \$380,000 for East Lake Sammamish Parkway improvements in the vicinity of Eden Creek to minimize flooding and reduce maintenance
- \$1,100,000 for Phase III widening of Issaquah-Fall City Road from SE 48<sup>th</sup> Street to Klahanie Drive, including curbs, gutters, sidewalks and a bicycle lane on the north side, and drainage, street lighting, landscaping, environmental mitigations, modification of the traffic signal and a bridge crossing the North Fork of Issaquah Creek
- \$1,314,000 for replacement of the Elliott Bridge at the 149<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE crossing of the Cedar River, with realignment of the approach roads and widening of the shoulders
- \$200,000 for relocation of Taylor Creek from a roadside ditch to a natural stream channel, in conjunction with road improvements
- \$50,000 contribution toward the Washington State Department of Transportation's SR 169 Corridor Study to determine improvements needed to the state highway

### Environmental improvement funds will go toward:

- \$220,000 for acquisition of the Log Cabin Reach of Issaquah Creek, including 152 acres of mature forests and wetlands for protection of wildlife and salmon habitat
- \$300,000 for conservation and agricultural easements on 120 acres at the confluence of Issaquah, Carey and Holder Creeks for protection of salmon habitat
- \$250,000 for acquisition of the forested 7.8-acre Johnson property on Issaquah Creek for protection of salmon habitat
- \$50,000 more for May Valley Flood Reduction projects, in addition to the \$400,000 carryover from 2003
- \$300,000 for improvement of drainage conveyance at Laughing Jacobs Creek and Rainbow Ranch on the Sammamish Plateau to control flooding.
- \$120,000 for floodplain restoration on the Preston Reach of the Raging River to improve salmon habitat and reduce flooding
- \$100,000 for acquisition of development rights on 110 acres of the Striker Forest in Ravensdale
- \$200,000 for restoration in the Taylor Creek floodplain on Maxwell Road near Maple Valley
- \$640,000 for acquisition of floodplain and wetland areas along Taylor Creek to prevent flooding and improve salmon habitat
- \$100,000 for restoration of Cedar River connection to former floodplain at the Renton Lions Club property

### Parks funding will go toward

- \$250,000 for the Precipice Trail Corridor Project, involving up to 153 acres linking northeast Cougar Mountain with the Issaquah city limits.
- \$869,054 toward regional trail development and debt repayment
- \$685,255 for construction and paving of the Cedar River Trail
- \$200,000 for acquisition of Ravensdale property for development of Regional Sports Park with ball fields

### Infrastructure improvement funds will go toward:

- \$100,000 for the Landfill Gas to Energy Project
- \$8,023,000 for closure of filled areas at the Cedar Hills Landfill, development of new areas and relocation of the flare station



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### Information for our community:

- Message from Councilmember Irons
- Land Use Updates
- Transportation Updates

## Environment

### Tibbetts Creek Coho Project



In November, I took advantage of an opportunity to assist with the Salmon Restoration Project on Tibbetts Creek in Issaquah. This exciting project aims to restore wild coho salmon runs to the creek after many years without fish. Recent and on-going habitat improvement projects and culvert repairs will provide better salmon rearing habitat and improved access to spawning areas on Tibbetts Creek, which runs in the valley between Squak and Cougar mountains. The salmon restoration effort involves transporting live adult salmon from the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery to Tibbetts Creek. The squirming red and pink salmon that have returned

upstream to spawn are netted in the hatchery's holding pond, transferred to water-filled totes in heavy-duty pick-up trucks, then driven to several locations on Tibbetts Creek and released one at a time by hand.

Although the water smells different than Issaquah Creek, most of the salmon will spawn and die in Tibbetts Creek, improving the chances that their offspring will be able to survive.

This year, the effort transplanted 769 adult coho to Tibbetts Creek, thanks to a partnership among the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Muckleshoot Tribe, Mountains to Sound Greenway and the Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery.